

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3425

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CY GR TU

SUBJ: CYPRUS NEGOTIATIONS

REF STATE 106101

1. WHEN I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS SEVERAL PENDING ITEMS (SEPTELS), I BRIEFED HIM ON THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH MAKARIOS ALONG THE LINES OF REFTEL. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND SAID THAT THIS SUMMARY CONFORMED TO HIS OWN REPORT OF THE MEETING. BITSIOS SAID TO REMIND THE SECRETARY THAT HE HAS BEEN TELLING THE SECRETARY RIGHT ALONG THAT MAKARIOS REALLY WANTS AND BELIEVES IN THE SECRETARY'S ABILITY TO BRING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. BITSIOS SAID TO TELL THE SECRETARY THAT SADAT HAD COMMENTED ALONG SIMILAR LINES WITH RESPECT TO THE SECRETARY AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM WHEN HE (BITSIOS) WAS IN CAIRO A FEW WEEKS AGO. BITSIOS SAID HE HAS BEEN STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT SADAT BELIEVES THAT ONLY THE SECRETARY CAN PREVAIL UPON THE ISRAELIS AND MAKARIOS BELIEVES THAT ONLY THE SECRETARY CAN PREVAIL UPON THE TURKS TO ARRIVE AT SOLUTIONS TO THESE TERRIBLY COMPLEX AND DANGEROUS PROBLEMS.

2. WHEN I ASKED BITSIOS ABOUT HIS IMPRESSIONS OF LAST WEEK'S CLERIDES-DENKTASH MEETINGS IN VIENNA HE EXPRESSED
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SOME DISAPPOINTMENT BUT--FOR HIM--NO OVERWHELMING DIS-

SATISFACTION. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN SEEING CLERIDES SINCE THE LATTER'S ARRIVAL IN ATHENS AND WAS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF MAKARIOS LATE TOMORROW MORNING WHEN THEY WOULD ALL GET TOGETHER AND "REVIEW HOW THINGS STAND". HE REFERRED, IN USUAL DISPARAGING TERMS OF DENKTASH, COMMENTING WITH SOME SARCASM THAT THE LATTER AS PRESIDENT OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT FEDERATED STATE CONSIDERED HIMSELF "TOO IMPORTANT" TO MEET WITH CLERIDES BUT AT THE SAME TIME COULD NOT MAKE A MOVE IN VIENNA WITHOUT CHECKING WITH HIS "EXPERTS AND ADVISERS" THAT "EVERYONE KNOWS" IS ANKARA ITSELF. BITSIOS SAID NOT HAD HAPPENED AT VIENNA BUT AT LEAST THERE WAS NO BREAKDOWN AND THAT WAS ALL TO THE GOOD. HE SAID HE HOPED THE TURKS HAD NOT HELD BACK FROM SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS THERE IN THE EXPECTATION THAT HE (BITSIOS) WOULD DO THE NEGOTIATING FOR THE GREEK SIDE WHEN HE MET WITH CAGLAYANGIL SOME TIME LATER THIS MONTH. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE WAS NOT EMPOWERED OR QUALIFIED TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE GREEK SIDE AND HAD NO INTENTION OF SUBSTITUTING HIMSELF FOR CLERIDES.

3. BITSIOS SAID HE WAS HOPING THAT DENKTASH WOULD COME BACK TO THE NEXT MEETING IN EARLY JUNE WITH SOME CONCRETE PROPOSALS AND READY TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT. HE SAID THAT IF THE TURKS ACCEPTED THE SUGGESTIONS OF WALDHEIM, AS LIMITED AS THEY WERE, CYPRUS WOULD BE ON ITS WAY TO A SETTLEMENT, THE TURKS WOULD GET U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE RESTORED, THEIR BADLY-SOILED INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION WOULD IMPROVE, GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND NATO TENSIONS WOULD EASE--IN FACT, EVERYTHING WOULD BE SO MUCH BETTER FOR TURKEY THAT HE COULD NOT SEE HOW THEY COULD FAIL TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT IN THE RECONVENING WITH WALDHEIM A FEW WEEKS FROM NOW. HOWEVER, BITSIOS WENT ON, VISION AND IMAGINATION WERE NOT AMONG THE TURKS' MOST NOTABLE TRAITS, SO WE WOULD JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

4. WHILE WE WERE TALKING, BITSIOS' SECRETARY BROUGHT HIM A TELEGRAM FROM NICOSIA. HE READ IT AND SIGHED DISCONSOLATELY. HE SAID HE HAD JUST LEARNED THAT THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS WOULD VOTE ON THEIR "CONSTITUTION" ON SUNDAY, MAY 18, WHICH COULD THROW A MONKEY WRENCH INTO HIS PLANS TO TRY AND ARRANGE A BILATERAL MEETING WITH

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CAGLAYANGIL. HE SAID THAT THE TURKS' SENSE OF TIMING AND LACK OF SENSITIVITY WERE ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF. HE ASKED IF WE HAD TRIED TO DO ANYTHING TO HEAD OFF THE PUBLICATION OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT CONSTITUTION. I TOLD HIM THAT IN LINE WITH TZOUNIS' REQUEST THE END OF LAST WEEK, AND AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRAKIS' APPROACH TO THE DEPARTMENT, THAT I UNDERSTOOD WE HAD SOUGHT TO POINT OUT TO APPROPRIATE TURKISH AUTHORITIES OUR VIEW THAT UNILATERAL ACTIONS OF THIS NATURE WERE MOST

UNHELPFUL. I ALSO MENTIONED THAT I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE
PLEBISCITE WAS AUTOMATICALLY SET FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY FOLLOWING
PUBLICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THEREFORE ONCE IT WAS
PUBLISHED LAST MONDAY, IT WAS A FORGONE CONCLUSION THAT THE
REFERENDUM WOULD BE HELD MAY 18. BITSIOS ACKNOWLEDGED THIS AND
SIMPLY SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY AS THOUGH TO SAY "YOU SEE WHAT
WE HAVE TO PUT UP WITH THESE PEOPLE." KUBISCH

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